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U.S. JETS NEAR GULF IMPROVE WAR DATA

They Monitor Iran's Oil Area From
Over Saudi Arabia — Ground
Radar Station Is Opened

By **RICHARD HALLORAN**

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 8 — United States radar planes flying above Saudi Arabia have enhanced American surveillance of large parts of the Iraq-Iran battlefield, including the besieged cities of Khurramshahr and Abadan, military analysts said today.

At the same time, officials here said that a United States ground radar station that was sent to improve Saudi air defenses went into operation today, completing the first phase of American military assistance to Saudi Arabia since the conflict between its neighbors began. A communications unit is also in operation, they said.

In addition, the top American specialist in air defense, Maj. Gen. John L. Piotrowski of the Air Force, started today to examine Saudi air defenses and to coordinate the operation of the American units with Saudi radar, communications and air defense units.

Officials here said that General Piotrowski was also studying what other American help the Saudis might need, including more aircraft, if they come under attack from Iran.

Deployments to Egypt Planned

In related developments, officials disclosed that 8 to 12 Air Force A-7 attack planes would accompany a 1,400-member Army Rapid Deployment Force to the Egyptian base at Ras Benas, across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia, next month.

The United States also plans to send a squadron of F-4 Phantoms or F-16 fighters to the Egyptian base at Cairo West this month in a training exercise similar to one just completed there by a squadron of Phantoms.

The first of the four Airborne Warning and Control Aircraft operating over Saudi Arabia arrived there on Oct. 1 and went into operation almost immediately. Three more of the planes, which are military versions of the Boeing 707 packed with electronic sensors and communications equipment, have since arrived at a Saudi base near Riyadh.

The planes, known as Awacs, fly an elliptical course close to the border with Kuwait in 10-hour shifts, providing 24-hour coverage. They communicate with an Air Force ground station in a Saudi operations center.

What Planes Can 'See'

The Awacs planes can "see" about 250 miles at low altitudes and up to 350 miles at high altitudes. They can spot aircraft flying low to elude ground radar as well as high-flying intruders. The Awacs planes can also track tanks, trucks and other vehicles and can monitor ships in the Persian Gulf.

Analysts here said that the operations of the Awacs had shown that they could monitor Iraqi and Iranian battle movements in an arc extending almost as far north as the Iranian city of Dizful and including the Iranian oilfields along the gulf coast and the oil terminal on Kharg Island.

An Awacs aloft transmits information to the Saudi operations center, where Saudi officers could use it to guide their fighters on air-defense missions. Officials here said that there had been several training missions with Saudi fighters but that there had been no hostile intrusions.

The officials said that care was being taken to insure that information from the Awacs planes did not fall into Iraqi hands because President Carter has asserted that the United States will remain neutral in the conflict.

Two Other Units in Operation

They said that the United States had received assurances from the Saudi Government that the information would not be given to the Iraqis. In addition, the officials said, the information was being screened and the Saudis were receiving only what was considered necessary for their defense.

Officials said that the Carter Administration plans to keep the planes on station as long as the conflict continues. They also said that the United States would offer similar help to other nonbelligerents in the region, but they emphasized that weapons would not be offered.

The ground radar station that went into operation today can spot aircraft about 200 miles away and determine their altitude and distance, officials said. It is placed so that its radar cone complements a similar Saudi unit, they said.

The officials said that the Air Force communications unit sent to Saudi Arabia enables all American units there to talk to each other, to talk to the fleet centered on two aircraft carriers in the Arabian Sea and to communicate with American military headquarters in Europe.

With General Piotrowski's 20-member team, the number of American military people in Saudi Arabia rose to over 800, the officials said. About 400 were there before the conflict as advisers, engineers on projects and administrative people handling military sales. Since then, another 400 in flight crews, technicians, communications specialists and other support roles have arrived.